



## **Report to the Legislature**

### **Washington State Kinship Care Oversight Committee**

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December 2011

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Report to the Legislature  
December 2011**

**Table of Contents**

Executive Summary.....	3
Kinship Care Oversight Committee 2011 Recommendations .....	4
Background .....	5
Kinship Care Oversight Committee Activities .....	7
Advocacy, Education & Awareness.....	7
Kinship Navigator Program .....	7
Exploring Legal Issues and Options for Kinship Caregivers .....	9
Collaboration to Support Kinship Care Families .....	9
Kinship Care Support within Department of Social and Health Services .....	15
DSHS Kinship Care Website Link .....	15
DSHS Collaborations Supporting Kinship Care.....	15
Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R.6893) .....	15
Training .....	16
Attachment 1	
2002 Kinship Care Report Recommendations & 2010 Status Report .....	18
Attachment 2	
Kinship Navigator Programs/Sponsoring AAA .....	23
Attachment 3	
Kinship Care Work Group Plan .....	25

*Interspersed throughout this report are the winning poems and essays from the “2011Voices of Children” event, writings by children who are living the experience of being raised by kinship caregivers.*

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**Executive Summary**

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee (Oversight Committee) was formed in 2003 to provide guidance in identifying, supporting and strengthening kinship care families. Since that time, the Oversight Committee has worked hard to improve life for these families. Achievements include:

- Divisions within DSHS are collaborating more and are better able to respond to the needs of kinship caregivers.
- Area Agencies on Aging are better able to serve kinship caregiving families with available resources.
- DSHS has a direct line to hear from the caregivers themselves.
- A diverse group of stakeholders are planning together and making themselves heard on kinship care issues, both on the local level and in the Oversight Committee itself.
- Legislators have a better understanding of caregiver issues and have passed budget and policy items that have positively impacted caregivers.

Kinship caregivers, most often grandparents, often struggle with the challenges of parenting a second family. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee coordinates programs and works closely with the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to identify and develop parenting, financial, and legal resources. The work of the Oversight Committee supports networking, training, and information sharing among the 13 AAAs and families they serve. With the support of the Oversight Committee and the local AAAs, the local county and regional kinship collaborations are very active and successful in their work with families.

The Kinship Navigators directed by eight Area Agencies on Aging are on the front lines, working one-on-one with kinship care families. The Navigators are the critical link to needed resources for families in need. The Oversight Committee hopes that sufficient funding will eventually be available to staff all 13 AAAs with Navigators.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Fostering Connections) is designed to promote permanency through relative guardianship and adoption. This act is having an impact on the DSHS partners on the Oversight Committee. Through this federal legislation, grant applications were submitted and the Family Connection Discretionary Grant was awarded in 2009. This grant includes Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Yakima and has been used to expand the Navigator Program. Fostering Connections also supports more complete and immediate relative searches at the beginning of child welfare cases.

## Kinship Care Oversight Committee 2012 Recommendations

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee comprised of kinship caregivers, child advocates, legislative staff, state agency representatives, non-profit services providers, tribes and legal community representatives made the following recommendations for 2012:

- Maintain funding for Kinship Navigators, the Aging and Disability Services Administration's (ADSA) Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Children's Administration's (CA) Relative Support Funds, and other services for Kinship caregivers.
- Work with CA to promote the relative guardianship option made available through Fostering Connections federal legislation.
- Work with CA to increase the number of licensed relative homes.
- Seek creative ways to provide kinship caregivers with much needed breaks (respite care). Work in collaboration with the Respite and Crisis Care Coalition of Washington state on the state's three-year federally funded Lifespan Respite Grant.
- Continue to explore ways to provide legal assistance to kinship caregivers by expanding legal kiosks in courthouses and by other means.
- Continue to build collaborations with foster parent community, including keeping the Navigators connected with the liaisons and work with the foster parent community when possible.
- Continue collaboration building between the CSOs, Navigators and Children's Administration to connect clients effectively with services.



## **Background**

In the November 2002 Kinship Care Report to the legislature, the Kinship Care Workgroup proposed 16 high priority recommendations for improving kinship care in Washington State. In response to that report, the 2003 Legislature enacted SHB 1233, which required the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to create a Kinship Care Oversight Committee. In 2005, the Legislature passed SHB 1280, which continued the Committee through 2010. The 2009 Legislature continued the committee to June 30, 2011 and the 2011 Legislature extended the committee to June 30, 2013.

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee was established to provide guidance in identifying, supporting and strengthening kinship care families. Membership includes kinship caregivers, child advocates, legislative staff, representatives of state agencies, non-profit service providers, tribes, and the legal community. Since the Oversight Committee was established, improvements have occurred in several areas:

- Divisions within DSHS are collaborating more and are better able to respond to the needs of kinship caregivers.
- Area Agencies on Aging are better able to serve kinship caregiving families with available resources.
- DSHS has a direct line to hear from the caregivers themselves.
- A diverse group of stakeholders are planning together and making themselves heard on kinship care issues, both on the local level and in the Oversight Committee itself.
- Legislators have a better understanding of caregiver issues and have passed budget and policy items that have positively impacted caregivers.

### **What Do We Know About Our Kinship Caregivers?**

A report published by the Pew Research Center in September 2010 provided national information about grandparents raising grandchildren. A notable fact is that the number of grandparents raising grandchildren has risen dramatically since 2007, the first year of the Great Recession. One in ten children live with a grandparent, and of those, 41 percent are being raised primarily by that grandparent with no parent in the home.

There are notable differences by race among grandparents who are primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Fifty-three percent are White which is the fastest growing caregiver population. Twenty-four percent are Black, 18 percent are Hispanic, and 3 percent are Asian.

On September 15, 2010, at the One Table Group Meeting on Children on TANF in Washington State, information on the wellbeing of children and caregivers was presented:

- The average age of the household head is 50 years.

- The household head is at or above the medical risk of the average SSI client.
- About half of the household heads are employed with an income of approximately \$26,000 per year.
- Children in child only TANF cases comprise 39 percent of the total children on TANF.
- Of the 39 percent of children who receive a child only TANF grant, 44 percent reside in kinship care families (17 percent of the total on TANF).
- Half of those children are White.
- The largest age group is 6-12 year olds (39 percent).
- Teens are next at 32 percent; 0-5 year olds are 28 percent of the population.
- The number of boys and girls is approximately the same.
- Almost half of the children aged 12-18 years had a documented mental health need. This is only slightly less than for children aged 6-11 years. The most common diagnoses for younger children were ADHD and anxiety disorders; for teens, depression and anxiety disorders were the most common diagnoses.
- Children on child only TANF experienced higher rates of mental illness and substance abuse if they had been a part of a CPS investigation for abuse or neglect.
- Approximately two-thirds of the parents of children living with relatives had substance abuse and/or mental health issues.
- About half of the household heads had identified behavioral health needs and approximately 13 percent had a substance abuse need. While these seem like high numbers, they are lower than the behavioral health and substance abuse needs of parents in adult TANF households.
- Approximately 12 percent of the kinship child only TANF cases had CPS involvement which related to the kinship placement.
- Around 10 percent of the household heads had historical CPS involvement compared to 19 percent of parents in adult TANF households.

With the steady increase of kinship care nationally and in Washington State, the Kinship Care Oversight Committee continues to be committed and guided by the 2002 recommendations. An update on the progress on each recommendation is included in Attachment 1.

## Kinship Care Oversight Committee Activities

The Kinship Care Oversight Committee and its subcommittees provide advocacy, education, and awareness to the community and legislators about the needs of kinship caregivers. The committee is focused on the areas identified in the 2002 Kinship Care report: financial needs; service delivery and practice; legal issues; and social services.

### Advocacy, Education and Awareness

Members of the Kinship Care Oversight Committee are instrumental in planning and organizing various recognition events, conferences, and other efforts highlighting the important role of kinship care providers. The Oversight Committee works to increase awareness of kinship care issues. Some of the events which honor and support our relative caregivers include:

- Washington State Kinship Care Children's Poetry, Drawing and Essay Contest, *Voices of Children-Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives*. **Read some of the entries scattered throughout this report.**
- Regional Kinship Care conferences, trainings or support groups in all three DSHS regions.
- Local celebrations and recognition events honoring the contributions of kinship caregivers.
- Proclamation by the Governor honoring relatives raising children.

The Oversight Committee is also involved in the following activities:

- Implementation, oversight, and expansion of the Kinship Navigator program;
- Identification and development of financial resources for kinship care families;
- Exploration of legal issues and development of legal resources for relative caregivers;
- Provision of training opportunities for caregivers;
- Implementation of a subsidized relative guardianship program in the state of Washington;
- Exploration and development of respite care service options and models;
- Representing kinship care in other DSHS and/or statewide related efforts, such as Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents, Respite and Crisis Care Coalition of WA State;
- Expansion and diversification of its membership; and
- Local collaborations to support kinship care families.

### Kinship Navigator Program

Promoting and supporting the Kinship Navigator Program across the state has been a very high priority for the Oversight Committee.

Grandparents and relatives who are raising children are often unaware of available supports. Kinship Navigators connect families with a multitude of community resources, such as health, financial, and legal services; support groups, and emergency funds. For example, Kinship Navigators help kinship caregivers locate appropriate housing to fit their expanded family size, explain how to apply for various benefits, advocate on their behalf, and help acquire beds, clothes, and food for their children.

Kinship Navigators provide a crucial link between relatives and these services. These links create more stable environments to help keep children out of the child welfare system and better support the relatives.

The Kinship Navigator Program is administered through the DSHS Aging and Disability Services Administration which contracts with local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). The AAAs provide the services directly or contract out the service(s) to a local community service organization. ADSA facilitates a monthly conference call with the Kinship Navigators to provide access to information, subject experts and create networking opportunities.

The award of a federal Family Connection demonstration grant given to Catholic Family and Child Services (CFCS) in Region 2 expanded the number of Navigators in the state from 7.9 FTEs to 10.4 FTEs. These additional Navigators have focused their services on a couple of underserved counties in the Southeast region along with serving Native American caregivers in the Yakama Nation area. The project is a collaboration between the Yakama Nation, the Children's Administration, Casey Family Programs, and CFCS.

The long term goal of the Kinship Navigator Program is to have Navigators available to serve caregivers in all 13 AAA service areas in the state. Areas which do not yet have Kinship Navigators include Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Pacific, Kitsap, Snohomish, Island, San Juan and Skagit Counties, and the Colville Indian Reservation.

In 2011, a new collaboration began to bring together the work of the Kinship Navigators with that of the Foster Parent Liaisons, hired through contracts between Children's Administration and private agencies. Like the Navigators, the Liaisons are located throughout the state. Both groups have similar responsibilities of sharing information, referrals and helping caregivers navigate the social service system. Liaisons work in the formal system while Navigators provide support primarily for those in the informal system, which includes caregivers who do not have an open case with the Children's Administration. A statewide conference call was held in September with the Liaisons and Navigators. Some of the Liaisons and Navigators reported they are already working together; some were glad to have contact information about others who are doing similar work. More conference calls are planned and communication and collaboration have been reported as a result of the work done in 2011.



As the result of discussions between kinship and foster parent leaders, the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPAWS) voted to put a kinship provider on their board of directors. A representative hasn't been chosen yet but they are working with the kinship community to find a provider who would be interested.

One Kinship Navigator has also been active planning the Pacific Northwest Caregiver's Conference January 16-18, 2012. Leaders in the kinship community will be honored at FPAWS-sponsored Night of a Thousand Dreams on January 16, 2012.

The goal is for the two communities of caregivers to work together more closely for the common good of the children in their care.

Also in 2011, discussions were held in three regions to tie together the work of the Community Service Offices (CSOs) with that of the Navigators. This is another activity designed to increase collaboration and use the increasingly limited resources to greater effectiveness. Representatives of the Children's Administration were included in those discussions to further build the collaboration.

See Attachment 2 for a complete listing of the Kinship Navigators and their sponsoring agencies.

### **Exploring Legal Issues and Options for Kinship Caregivers**

The Oversight Committee continues its advocacy for expanding legal services, currently offered in several counties to be more available across the state. Increasing legal services information available on the Internet along with printed and DVD resources remain a priority. The Oversight Committee will continue to explore funding options for legal services.

The longest running kinship legal project in the state is the Kinship Care Solutions Project sponsored by the King County Bar Association. It continues to provide direct representation to low-income relatives and other caregivers in nonparental custody (also known as third party custody) cases through referrals to a pro bono panel of trained attorneys. The Project provides comprehensive training and ongoing mentoring to the volunteer attorneys. In Thurston County, legal information can be found through a self-help legal education kiosk (the first of its kind) located at the Thurston County Courthouse, along with monthly workshops to assist relatives with completing legal paperwork. Other court systems have expressed an interest in the kiosk model.

In Whatcom County, a free monthly Kinship Non-parental Custody Clinic began in July 2010. This service is a collaborative effort between LAW Advocates of Whatcom County and Northwest Regional Council.

### **Collaboration to Support Kinship Care Families**

The *King County Kinship Collaboration*, the Yakima area's *KINdred Spirits Coalition*, and the *Clark County Kinship Care Coalition* have been in existence for several years and each continues to expand. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee actively works with these and the other newer coalitions (Lewis-Mason-Thurston, Pierce, and Whatcom counties) to share information, resources, and events. Following are examples of specific activities.

The ***King County Kinship Collaboration*** reports the following activities in the past year:

- Held monthly networking meetings with an average attendance of 25 people.
- Supported the opening of the County's first Kinship Center in Sept 2011.
- Continued outreach and networking with new partners (City of Federal Way and YMCA are new partners of note who have showed their commitment to kinship families).
- Held quarterly social events (a holiday gathering, a kinship caregiver day celebration, summer picnic and kinship family camp) attended by more than 300 people, which provided county-wide networking opportunities, respite, and information and support for kinship families and service providers.
- Published a quarterly newsletter, maintained the collaboration's website [www.kckinship.org](http://www.kckinship.org).
- Supported and partnered with the Kinship Navigator program and the County's ten Kinship Support Groups.
- Helped Organize Kinship Advocacy Day at the Legislature, organized visits with legislators, two people to testify, developed fact sheet and organized on-going advocacy.
- Collaborated with RAYS Support Group for \$5,000 respite grant from AdoptUSKids. Worked with kinship families in designing the respite activities; the grant money will be used for these activities.
- Support to resident doctor on two presentations on kinship families to Seattle Children's Hospital residents and doctors.

The ***Yakima Region's KINdred Spirits Collaboration*** reports the following activities in the past year:

- Held monthly networking meetings.
- Started a support group in Yakima, Walla Walla, Tri-Cities and Sunnyside
- Facilitated the One Heart Support Group.
- Maintained a clothing bank out of a caregiver's home.
- Published bi-monthly newsletters in both English and Spanish.
- Formed a legal options committee to look at ways to help kinship families obtain third party custody.

- Held a Back to School barbecue with seed money from an anonymous donor in collaboration with the Southeast Community Center.
- Held back-to-school events in the Walla Walla and Tri-Cities areas.
- Held a Caregiver Appreciation Dessert and Tea to celebrate National Caregivers' Month.
- Held a Caregiver Conference in Yakima in collaboration with FPAWS
- Held a brunch in May to celebrate Caregiver's Day.
- Started a Legal Options Clinic in Yakima once a month in collaboration with Casey, VAS, and Northwest Justice Project.
- Held our annual KINdred Spirits working retreat to assess what goals we reached and what new goals we want to reach in the next year.
- Participated in the quarterly Oversight meetings.
- Held a Parenting the Second Time Around class for foster and kinship families.

The ***Clark County Kinship Caregiver Coalition*** was formed in 2005 to provide a forum for information sharing and networking around kinship caregiver services. The goal is to encourage "no wrong door" referrals, identify gaps in kinship care services, and to assure that those who work with families in a wide variety of settings are aware of the various resources and support available for families who take kin into their care. Partners include Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities, Children's Administration Region 6, Educational Opportunities for Children and Families (EOCF), Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program, Children's Center, and Children's Home Society of Washington. The Coalition has been involved in the following:

- Held monthly networking meetings.
- Supported and partnered with the Kinship Navigator's work in five southwest Washington counties.
- Received a Community Foundation of Southwest Washington grant (with Clark County Volunteer Lawyers program as lead) for a Kinship Caregiver Resource Fair.
- Coordinated the successful Clark County Kinship Caregiver Resource Fair that included nine workshops, resource bags, and free massage therapy.
- Participated in various community resource fairs and outreach events to increase awareness of Kinship Navigator, Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Parenting Again and other partner resources that help relatives taking on the awesome challenge of parenting a second time around.
- Publicized special activities and events for Relatives Raising Relatives in the Parent Education Consortium monthly e-newsletter distributed to over 3,000 agencies, organizations, and individuals.

- Created links between Kinship Caregiver Support Program, Family Caregiver Support programs, Kinship Navigator program and local services including support, education, and counseling resources.

The ***Lewis-Mason-Thurston County Kinship Advisory Committee*** organized the following activities in the past year:

- Sponsored the Third Annual Kinship Connections Conference in Olympia in October of 2010, key-noted by DSHS Assistant Secretary for Children's Administration Denise Revels Robinson.
- Collaborated with local service groups such as Jubilee, Zonta Club Olympia, Altursa Club, Fife Police Department, and the Junior League of Olympia to sponsor a Kinship Family Holiday Event.
- Collaborated with the Hands On Museum to procure and distribute "Family Passes" for kinship families.
- Organized Kinship Advocacy Day at the Legislature on February 17, 2011. Kinship Caregivers received advocacy training, lunch and had the opportunity to discuss their needs with two members of the legislature. Many caregivers also met with other elected officials following the training. Speakers included Representative Pettigrew and children's advocate Laurie Lippold.
- Organized a Kinship Family Gathering at Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound, WA, on May 18, 2011. Over 200 people participated in a day of respite, an awards ceremony, and listened to several children raised in relative care read heartwarming essays about the value they found in relative placement.
- August 24, 2011, the annual Voices of Children contest for Kinship Children was held. Winners and their families met with Lt. Governor Brad Owen for an Award and Recognition Ceremony.
- Facilitated four Kinship Family Support Groups in the three-county area including Olympia, Rainier, Shelton, and Centralia. Local specialists and resource personnel provided educational trainings at these group meetings and Kinship Navigators (both English and Spanish speaking) were on hand to provide resources.
- The Kinship Navigator participated on the Child-Only TANF redesign team which led to an ongoing effort of collaboration with Navigators and Local CSO staff. This effort has increased communication and resource sharing and helped caregivers to better understand and respond to recent changes in TANF and Disability Lifeline cuts.
- Worked to build a stronger relationship between foster and kinship caregivers, with support from Bob Partlow, Foster Parent Support and Recruitment officer in Children's Administration,. Discussions included collaborating on trainings, resources and working on a January 2012 collaborative conference at the Great Wolf Lodge.

- Received a \$20,000 grant through ADSA to implement respite care services in Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties for high-stress relative caregivers. Several events held to date include group respite, summer camps and individual case management around respite options.
- Worked with the PLU Nurse Residency program to rotate a visiting nurse pilot program for relative caregivers with health risks/concerns. Eight caregivers were successfully served and had chronic and acute conditions addressed. While currently only in Thurston County, expansion to Lewis and Mason Counties is being explored. This program has been a great benefit to caregivers who have no, or minimal, health care options.
- Kinship Navigator offered training to CSO front line staff.
- Kinship Navigator collaborated with the local United Way and several banking institutions to develop and launch a “Bank ON” fiscal literacy program that helps caregivers to open and sustain bank accounts.

In Whatcom County, several networks focus on kinship issues:

The **Whatcom County Kinship Partnership Group** includes: LAW Advocates, DSHS, Brigid Collins Family Support Center, Whatcom County Readiness to Learn, Opportunity Council, Whatcom Dispute Resolution center and Northwest Regional Council staff. This group meets quarterly and supports Kinship Navigator activities.

The **Whatcom County Family and Community Network** provides collaboration through monthly “Family to Family” meetings, which includes Children’s Administration, community organizations and support groups. This group also works with Fostering Together to organize support groups and hold recognition events. Brigid Collins Family Support Center and Catholic Community Services and Resource Family Training Institute collaborate to provide training specifically targeted to kinship caregiver needs.

The Whatcom County Collaborative highlights include:

- Planning and Facilitation of Caregiver Appreciation Events. 260-300 caregivers and children attended the Holiday Winter event and Summer “Surf’s Up Hawaiian Adventure” event.
- Northwest Regional Council continued to provide respite services from a grant received from Whatcom Community Foundation for Kinship Respite Care Services through May 2011.
- Collaborative monthly meetings with Northwest Regional Council, Whatcom County Family to Family and the Community Resource Network.
- YMCA and Whatcom County Youth Soccer staff worked to provide winter and spring activities to give respite to relative caregivers.
- Winter and Spring Camp Scholarship opportunities were provided for relative children, resulting in 9 more children served for a total of 24 children.

- The free monthly Kinship Non-Parental Custody Clinic is well attended and continues to be a great success. This service is a collaborative effort between LAW Advocates of Whatcom County and the Northwest Regional Council.
- Ongoing collaborative efforts between Northwest Regional Council, REBOUND, YMCA and local licensed childcare to provide respite services for relative caregivers.
- September, 2011. The Northwest Regional Council was awarded the Kinship Caregiver Respite Grant for \$20,000 to serve Kinship Caregivers in Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan and Island Counties. Actual service delivery will start January 2012-June 2013.

The Pierce County Kinship Collaboration meets on a bi-monthly basis. 2011 accomplishments include:

- Requested Governor Gregoire to declare May 18, 2011 Kinship Caregiver Day.
- Collaborated with the Pierce County Relatives Raising Children Advisory Board to host annual the Kinship Conference in May.
- Helped develop new a Pierce County Kinship Advocates Group.
- Assisted in hosting a Back-to-School event for Pierce County kinship families.
- Helped maintain a clothing bank for kinship families.

My Aunt Teresa has made a positive impact on my life. She is my guardian, my savior and in a way, my Mother. I am her brother's daughter, my dad passed away in 1993, when I was 9 months old. I have been raised by my grandparents. At age 11, I went to live with my real mom and stepdad. This was a neglecting home environment. My aunt saved me and placed me in her loving home at age 12. She has taught me how to love and be loved.

Now at age 17, she encourages me to graduate, she helps me with school and is always close by when I need her. I love when I share my feelings, thoughts, disappointments and school work with her. She has inspired me to fulfill my college career in fashion design.

My aunt may have not been there for my first word, step, school day, or first skinned knee, but she was there for my eighth grade graduation, first day of high school, first boyfriend, the day I got my braces off, my first prom and is there for me now. God was always there for me, because he sent my aunt. If not I would be still silently crying for help if she did not open up her arms. I dedicate this story to my aunt Teresa. I love her with all my heart and will never let her go.

Kalina, Age 17, Hoodspport, WA

## **Activities to Support Kinship Care Families Within The Department of Social and Health Services**

### **DSHS Kinship Care Website Link**

The Department of Social and Health Services provides a link and manages the Kinship Care Website, [www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare). This website was established in spring 2006, through the efforts of the Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA), the Economic Services Administration (ESA), and the Children's Administration (CA), with feedback from the Kinship Care Oversight Committee. The website has become increasingly important in providing information for caregivers and professionals who can access information on financial assistance, health care, drug/alcohol and mental health services, childcare, foster care, support programs, and information on caring for children with disabilities. The number of people accessing the website has grown every year since its development and now other statewide websites; e.g., Within Reach, Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network have links to it.

### **DSHS Collaborations Supporting Kinship Care**

Re-established in 2010 to help coordinate services to kinship families, the DSHS Kinship Care Workgroup (KCW) developed a work plan. Representatives of the Workgroup met with the Assistant Secretaries of Economic Services, Children's, and Aging and Disability Services in 2011 and presented their initial ideas. The Kinship Care Work Group plan is included in this document as Attachment 3.

The Workgroup includes representatives from Economic Services; Children's Administration; Aging and Disability Services; Health Care Authority; Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery; Division of Child Support; Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration; Office of Planning, Performance, and Accountability; Department of Health; Department of Early Learning (DEL); and the Special Education Ombudsman/Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

### **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act - (H.R. 6893)**

The Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893) was passed in October of 2008. The focus of this legislation is to help children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care. Fostering Connections Program instructions were received in 2010 that clarified some of the requirements and allowed the Children's Administration to move ahead with additional planning.

Recent implementation activities in CA that may impact kinship placements include:

- The state's subsidized relative guardianship program (R-GAP) has been implemented.
- The 30 day letter notifying relatives of a child's placement has just been revised to include information about R-GAP and to bring it into alignment with

the recent clarifications received regarding Fostering Connections. Social workers are effectively using this new tool and are more diligently researching relative resources very early in a case.

- The Foster Care to 21 program, which allows youth to stay in care after age 18 if they are in post-high school education or a training program, has been continued as a result of Fostering Connections.
- Licensed Resources is encouraging relative caregivers to become licensed in order to increase eligibility for R-GAP. The Licensing Office Chief will be visiting all the AAAs this fall to explore barriers to licensing and receive input regarding strategies to increase the number of licensed relatives.
- CA social work practices are resulting in more siblings being placed together.
- Policy has been revised to provide the same supports and resources to relative caregiver families as are provided to foster families. This means that now relative caregivers are eligible for such resources as clothing vouchers, transportation reimbursement, and respite.
- CA has located relative search specialists in different regions to help locate relatives when children enter out-of-home care.

During the 2011 legislative session, 2SHB 1128 was passed permitting the implementation of another provision of Fostering Connections for Success. CA implemented the Extended Foster Care program in July 2011, which allows dependent foster children that are in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and enrolled in high school or a GED program to continue in foster care until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday or the completion of high school or GED program, whichever comes first.

### **Training**

**The Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI)** provides training for foster, adopt and unlicensed relative caregivers statewide.

Kinship caregivers are able to access all training available through the CA Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI). This includes self-directed online workshops, online video trainings, and classroom trainings. Some training is developed specific to kinship caregivers.

The RFTI Lending Library was begun in 2009 and made available to all caregivers. More than 500 caregivers have used the library since July of 2009. It continues to be a valuable resource for educational material for caregivers.

Parenting a Second Time Around (PASTA) is a dynamic two-day facilitators' training to better help meet the parenting needs of relatives raising children. This training was developed by Cornell University Cooperative Extension and is presented annually. Over the past seven years Aging and Disability Services Administration has co-sponsored the



training with Washington State University Extension and various community organizations. After attending the workshop, participants present two workshops on one or more of the curriculum topics in their local communities over the next year. Among the various topics, the training includes: rebuilding a family; grief and loss; relatives and teens living together; addressing high-risk behaviors; effective discipline; protecting and planning for child's future; and locating resources and support.

Nana is there for me in the mornings  
She also attends to me each and every night  
Just to think about Nan anytime  
Is positively joy and sheer delight  
Nana reads to me beside the open fire  
And warms my heart with true desire  
We have laughed a lot and sometimes even cried  
As we sat close and hugged each other from side to side  
Nana and I share special memories along our way  
Never forgetting to give thanks and remembering to pray  
Our love reflected a rare bond from the start  
Showing direction and meaning of the heart  
Nana spoils me with her unselfish pleasure  
With fond memories to hold on to and treasure  
She embraces me with her support, love, and care  
And is never too busy for me while teaching me to share  
Nana works very hard, and is seldom in a hurry  
Makes time to listen and encourages me not to worry  
My sun continues to rise and shine  
Because I know that Nana is mine!  
Madison, Age 12, Spokane, WA

## ATTACHMENT 1

### 2002 Kinship Care Report Recommendations and Status Report

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Short-Term	2011 Status
Provide full TANF payment for second child in kinship family	Means testing required by the legislature has affected the economic situations of caregivers not involved with the formal system.
Strengthen relative search process	<p>Social workers have adjusted their practice to include new policies that are being implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social workers are asking parents about relative resources before the 72 hour shelter care hearing.</li> <li>• Letters are being sent to all identified adult relatives within 30 days of placement.</li> <li>• When making placement changes, social workers are considering relatives or suitable persons before using foster care.</li> <li>• Social workers are identifying as many relatives as possible before making a decision about ongoing placement.</li> <li>• CA regions have increased the number of relative search specialists, who have access to the information systems in partner agencies, such as ACES and SEMS. In addition, they have access to a purchased online program that searches other databases for information.</li> </ul>
Create Kinship Navigator positions	Eight FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) Kinship Navigators currently provide “one-stop shop” information and resources to relatives living in a 30 county area. In addition, the receipt of a federal Family Connection demonstration grant by Catholic Family and Child Services in southeast WA has expanded kinship navigation services in the 8-county, rural and urban area that surrounds Benton/Franklin counties and also includes a Tribal Navigator which can serve the Yakama Nation.
Implement aggressive public education and awareness campaign on kinship care issues	<p>The annual <i>Voices of Children</i> award ceremony with the Governor continues to recognize art, poetry, and essays created by children being raised by grandparents and other relatives. The ceremony provides a great opportunity to bring attention to kinship care.</p> <p>Various local and regional trainings and conferences also take place around the State along with six regional kinship collaborations.</p> <p>There are no dedicated funds for public education and awareness, so most efforts are generally local.</p>
Improve the delivery of TANF benefits to relative caregivers	<p>The DSHS Kinship Care webpage provides a wealth of information about various state resources available to kinship caregivers, including TANF and Medicaid.</p> <p>ESA is working on instructions which will assist relatives in appropriately filling out the form.</p>

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Short-Term	2011 Status
Create an education/medical consent waiver	The creation of the medical/dental/mental health waiver has been helpful, but there continues to be some confusion about what services a relative caregiver can consent to. The Oversight Committee is continuing to discuss what is needed to improve access to care. There is also no education waiver in statute. The Oversight Committee continues to assess whether a statute related to education is warranted. The brochure on medical consent has been updated and reprinted.
Establish a legal services pilot project	In addition to the various small kinship legal projects located around the state, a subcommittee of the Oversight Committee will continue to discuss recommendations regarding improving the availability of legal kinship resources.
Create a statewide respite care inventory	A three-year Lifespan Respite grant awarded to DSHS in 2010 is being used to improve the access and information about available respite care services for caregivers of individuals of all ages (including a statewide website and 1-800 number).
Establish a support services fund for relative caregivers	<p>The Kinship Caregivers Support Program continues to receive \$1 million per year (ADSA/DSHS). These funds support relative caregivers who are not involved with the formal child welfare system who have an emergent need or crisis.</p> <p>The Children's Administration budget allocated \$800,000 for FY 11 to support kinship families with open child welfare cases.</p>
Support Lifespan Respite Act and position state to receive funding	The recently received grant provides \$189, 000 over 3 years for lifespan respite programs. Work continued in 2011 to put the grant money to work most effectively.

Living with my grandparents has made a positive difference in my life. I live with my Grandma and Nanny, but spend the weekends with my Grandpa and Uncle.

All of my grandparents work, but now when they get home from work they spend all their free time taking good care of me and my brother. I know they must be tired after working so hard, but they always have time to do anything for us.

They take us shopping and buy us cool stuff. I know they don't have a lot of money so it makes me happy when I get new things.

Me and my little brother are so lucky to have a house that is clean, safe full of fun, and grandparents that will always be here for us.

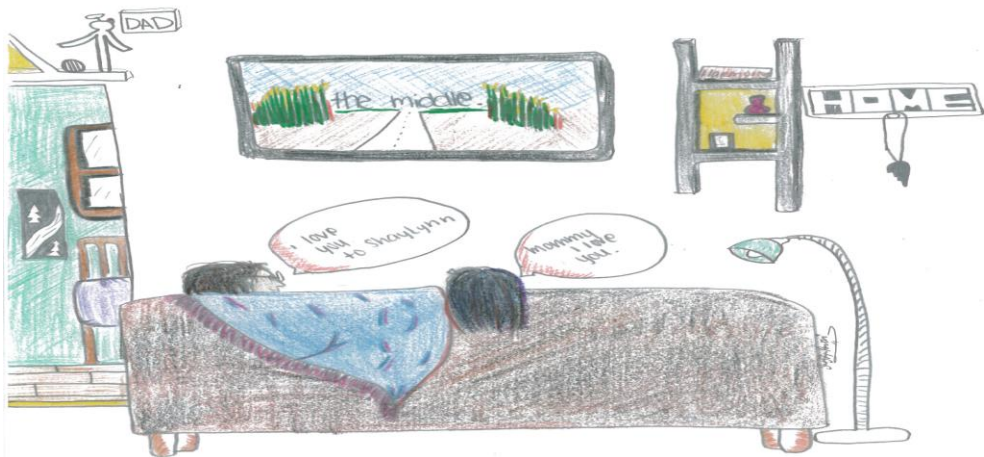
I hope that I will never forget all the things they have ever done in my life. They make me feel so special.

**Kaylynn, Age 8, Centralia, WA**

2002 Recommendations High Priority/Long Term	2011 Status
Provide full TANF payment for all multiple-child kinship families	This recommendation has not been implemented, in great part due to budget constraints. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The Oversight Committee is exploring ways other states are addressing financial assistance to kinship caregivers. The implementation of the relative guardianship option is seen as one way to increase support, but this is only available to a limited number of families with child welfare involvement.
Promote systems collaboration	<p>The DSHS Kinship Workgroup is an example of the commitment to collaboration among multiple state agencies serving kinship families. Collaboration between the Navigators and CSOs began in 2011 with meetings in three regions</p> <p>Collaborations between the Kinship Navigators and Foster Parent Liaisons were enhanced in 2011.</p> <p>Foster parent and kinship leaders began talking about ways in which they could work together for children in their care. The state Foster Parent Association will include a kinship provider on its board. .</p>
Provide GAL/CASA services	No formal action steps have been taken to address this issue specifically for kinship families. Progress is not expected in these tight budget times. The Oversight Committee will continue to advocate for provision of CASA services to kinship families.
Provide respite care services for relative caregivers	<p>Respite care continues to be a critical need for kinship caregivers and is one of the top two priorities identified by the cross-agency kinship committee.</p> <p>Children's Administration is now able to provide respite for kinship caregivers in the child welfare system.</p> <p>The Kinship Care Oversight Committee continues to advocate for the provision of respite dollars.</p> <p>ADSA has awarded three, 19- month, \$20,000 grants to Area Agencies on Aging (one eastern, two western WA) where respite pilot programs are available for kinship caregivers raising children.</p>
Provide training opportunities for all caregivers	Children's Administration offers training sessions to foster parents and relative caregivers each month. The training catalog is distributed through the Kinship Navigator network and is available online on the CA kinship webpage. The Lending Library operated by the Resource Training Institute continues to be available to kinship caregivers, with hundreds of training videos available

<b>2002 Recommendations Medium Priority/Short-Term</b>	<b>2011 Status</b>
Increase oversight and accountability for non-parent caregivers on TANF	This was looked at in the TANF redesign.
Incorporate kinship families in Special Children Health Care Needs pilot	No formal action steps have been developed to address this.
Fund legal information packet and website	The legal resources guide, developed by Legal Voices of Seattle, continues to be published and distributed. Additionally, a DVD on Washington state legal options for grandparents and other relatives and a video on mediation for kinship caregivers were developed and are circulated to support groups, kinship navigators, and to caregivers. The Oversight Committee continues to work on ways to identify and improve ways to improve access to legal resources. The Thurston County legal kinship kiosk model is seen as a possibility for other counties and states as a mechanism for information sharing.
Educate judges and attorneys about kinship care issues	This is an ongoing effort and is happening around the state in various ways. The local collaborations have partnered with many legal professionals in their communities, including judges, attorneys, and other service providers. Judges and attorneys are members of task forces and advisory committees with kinship caregivers, which provide opportunities for education and collaboration. The federal Fostering Connections legislation provided an opportunity for the court system to look at their practice regarding kinship care.
Support statewide Unified Family Court (UFC)	No formal action steps have been developed to address this; however, many members of the Oversight Committee supported recent legislation that moved in the UFC direction.

2002 Recommendations Federal Recommendation	2011 Status
Amend National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFSCP)/Older Americans Act/U.S. Administration on Aging	The Older Americans Act was amended in 2006, allowing for relatives, age 55 years or older who are raising their grandchildren to receive services under the NFSCP. Only 10 percent of the funding to states is permitted to serve relatives raising children.
Subsidized Guardianships	R-GAP has been implemented in the Children's Administration and is being revised as needed to stay in alignment with Fostering Connections changes and the needs of caregivers and Licensing in this state.



Now that my mema adopted me I feel loved. My favorite thing to do with her is watch a tv show called the middle. I shuggle up close, breath in, as soft peach and jasmine fill my nose. I exhail feeling warm and cossy. my mema makes me feel at home.

**Shaylynn Age 14, Seattle, WA**

## ATTACHMENT 2

### Washington State's Kinship Navigators Serving Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children

#### Southeast Washington

- **Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Kittitas, Yakima, and Walla Walla Counties:** Catholic Family and Child Services – Yakima

**Kinship Navigator:** Mary Pleger, [mpleger@ccyakima.org](mailto:mpleger@ccyakima.org), (509) 965-7100 or 1-800-246-2962

- **Benton, Franklin, Columbia, Garfield, Walla Walla, and Asotin Counties**

**Kinship Navigator: (Also Spanish Speaking)** Tina Khabir\*,  
[tkhabir@ccyakima.org](mailto:tkhabir@ccyakima.org), (509) 946-4645, ext. 2021

- **Yakima and Kittitas Counties**

**Kinship Navigator:** Mary Pleger, [mpleger@ccyakima.org](mailto:mpleger@ccyakima.org), (509) 965-7100 or 1-800-246-2962

- **Yakama Nation:** Yakama Nation Area Agency on Aging

**Kinship Navigator:** Karen Cummings, \* [kcummings@yakama.com](mailto:kcummings@yakama.com),  
(509) 865-1454

\*Funded by Federal Family Connections Grant

#### Central Washington

- **Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, Grant, Lincoln, and Adams Counties:** Catholic Family and Child Services

**Kinship Navigator:** Jennifer Santillan. [jsantillan@ccyakima.org](mailto:jsantillan@ccyakima.org),  
(509) 662-6761 ext. 4557 or 1-800-261-1094

#### Southwest Washington

- **Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Skamania, Wahkiakum Counties:** Children's Home Society, Southwest Washington Region

**Kinship Navigator:** Tammy Bedlion, [Tammyb@chs-wa.org](mailto:Tammyb@chs-wa.org), (360) 695-1325 ext. 4214

#### Eastern Washington

- **Ferry, Pend Oreille and Stevens Counties:** Rural Resources

**Kinship Navigator:** Vicki Pontecorvo, [vpontecorvo@ruralresources.org](mailto:vpontecorvo@ruralresources.org), (509) 684-3932 (part-time)

- **Spokane County:** Elder Services – Spokane Mental Health

**Kinship Navigator:** Angela Andreas [aandreas@smhca.org](mailto:aandreas@smhca.org), (509) 458-7450 ext. 3007

- **Whitman County:** Council on Aging and Human Services  
**Kinship Navigator:** Amanda Rich, [coaamanda@qwestoffice.net](mailto:coaamanda@qwestoffice.net), (509) 397-4305 ext. 102

#### Puget Sound

- **King County:** Senior Services of Seattle – King County  
**Kinship Navigator:** Helen Sawyer, [helens@seniorservices.org](mailto:helens@seniorservices.org), (206) 727-6264
- **Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties:** Family Education and Support Services  
**Kinship Navigator:** Lynn Urvina, [KinNavigator@qwestoffice.net](mailto:KinNavigator@qwestoffice.net), (360) 754-7629 or 1-877-813-2828  
**Spanish-speaking Navigator:** Rosa Venancio, [fessassist@qwestoffice.net](mailto:fessassist@qwestoffice.net), (360) 754-7629 or 1-877-813-2828
- **Pierce County:** HopeSparks  
**Kinship Navigator:** Rosalyn Alber, [ralber@hopesparks.org](mailto:ralber@hopesparks.org), (253) 565-4484 ext. 105  
**Kinship Navigator:** Jessie Holden, [jholden@hopesparks.org](mailto:jholden@hopesparks.org), (253) 565-4484 ext. 104

#### Northwest WA

- **Whatcom County:** Northwest Regional Council (AAA)  
**Kinship Navigator:** Laina Berry, [BerryLS@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:BerryLS@dshs.wa.gov); (360) 676-6749 (part-time)

#### State contact

**Hilari Hauptman, Aging and Disability Services Administration, DSHS**  
[Hilari.hauptman@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Hilari.hauptman@dshs.wa.gov), 1-800-422-3263 or (360) 725-2556

Kinship Care in WA State Website: [www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare)



### Attachment 3

## Kinship Care Work Group Plan

### Goal 1: Improve access to medical and mental health care for children in kinship families.

#### Short Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Mail automated EPSDT (well child exam) reminder letters from Provide One to caregivers of children outside the formal child welfare system.  EPSDT exams are associated with improved health outcomes for children.	Beginning in November, 2011 EPSDT letters will be mailed to children in the formal child welfare system. The functionality to mail letters to kinship care providers could not be supported because of cost.	We will explore other avenues of disseminating EPSDT promotional materials.	
Provide caregivers with access to healthcare information available in PRISM and Child Profile systems.  Since older caregivers in particular are far removed from contemporary child rearing practices and resources, they are an appropriate audience for this information.	DOH only mails Child Profile health promotion materials to birth parents. A newly funded e-mail project will make it possible to send to other caregivers.  An MPH intern is exploring how kinship caregivers might otherwise be connected with Child Profile.  The EPSDT brochure and a link to the Child Profile health promotion materials were posted on the DSHS Kinship Website.	DOH will pilot test the email project in 2011.  Develop ability to mail immunization history in CHILD Profile to kinship caregivers.  Develop ability to mail two years of healthcare history in PRISM to kinship caregivers.	
Work with nursing schools to promote projects focused on improving the health of children in kinship care.  In-home health/consultation services should benefit caregivers, who may have transportation and informational barriers.	Meetings took place with Pacific Luther University Dean, faculty, community partners, and ADSA to create a new wellness program focused on children in kinship care, in addition to the existing program for caregivers.	Continue to work with PLU nursing school on wellness program. Project likely to start by 2012.	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Connect caregivers to DEL's Early Support for Infant and Toddlers (ESIT) and DOH's Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) programs.</p> <p>RDA report ("Children on TANF in WA State") shows high incidence of mental health needs among children in kinship care (based on Medicaid data).</p>	<p>ESIT Program and CSHCN staff provided resource materials to kinship support groups and Kinship Navigators in 2010.</p> <p>The DSHS Kinship Website was updated to include links to ESIT, Medical Home Leadership Network, and CSHCN Programs.</p>	<p>Continue sharing resource information with kinship support groups and Navigators in 2011/2012.</p>	
<p><b>Metrics:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measure improved health outcomes by use of EPSDT encounter data.</li> <li>2. Measure improved health outcomes through evaluation component of the PLU nursing project.</li> </ol>			

### ***Longer Term Action Items***

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Promote EPSDT well-child exams as a requirement or recommendation for kinship caregivers receiving child-only TANF.</p> <p>See above.</p>	<p>Proposal advanced as part of TANF re-design process, including establishing baseline EPSDT rates.</p>	<p>Explore including EPDST letter and brochure as an attachment to the TANF award letter; will be taken up during TANF re-design implementation.</p>	
<p>Improve access to mental health services for children with moderate impairment by adding out of home/kinship care status to risk factors for "access to care" eligibility in Medicaid state plan.</p> <p>See data in RDA report.</p>	<p>DBHR has provided a Children's Mental Health redesign plan that broadens access for moderate needs Medicaid youth, and will integrate health care and mental health care services without access- to-care restrictions.</p>	<p>Continue work to broaden access-to-care, and clarify how kinship placement status increases risk for higher-level service need in RSN care.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Include care coordination referral component within managed care contracts for children in kinship care.</p> <p>Caregivers often receive children unexpectedly with little information about their prior health care history.</p>	<p>Inclusion of an automatic case management referral in the Healthy Options (HO) will not proceed at this time, though it may be taken up in the future. In the meantime, the number of quality measures that MCOs report on will be increased which may help to identify gaps in access to care.</p>	<p>Reconsider development of an automated case management referral for children in kinship care within the Healthy Options contracts, if data from quality care measures suggests there is a gap in healthcare access.</p>	
<p>Expand Provider access to healthcare history for children in their care.</p>	<p>Functionality has been established to allow Provider access to Medicaid billing data for children in formal foster care.</p>	<p>Efforts are underway as a part of healthcare reform to promote HIT, electronic health records and medical homes which may improve provider access to healthcare history information.</p>	
<p>Explore with Regional Support Networks (RSNs) their knowledge of the needs of kinship care families and gain knowledge of the access issues that these families face.</p>	<p>DSHS Research and Data Analysis (RDA) report "Children on TANF in Washington State: The Well-Being of Children and Caregivers" (Fall 2010) showed high percentage of children on TANF Child-Only with a mental health diagnosis.</p>	<p>Explore inclusion of kinship placement status as a risk variable in mental health intake assessments conducted by contracted RSN providers.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<b>Metrics:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add two kinship-related demographic questions to the 2012 State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) to gather more accurate health information on youth living in kinship care families. Develop a baseline, and compare kinship youth in foster care to those living with relatives. ADSA and DBHR collaborated on kinship and housing questions which were reviewed by researchers nationally and within DSHS and piloted with older youth through the DSHS Passion to Action Youth Advisory Board. State HYS committee has approved the recommended questions. Funding has been obtained through ADSA. Analysis to be completed by June 2013.</li> <li>2. Expand cross-systems data on kinship families, based on fall 2010 RDA report; identify Medicaid health outcomes for children in foster and kinship care.</li> <li>3. Inclusion of kinship care indicator in Healthy Options plans would allow collection of population-specific data on the quality of healthcare received by children in kinship care.</li> </ol>			

## **Goal 2: Improve the health of kinship caregivers, including through improved respite.**

### **Short Term Action Items**

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Expand and replicate Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) and Seattle Pacific University (SPU) nursing school home visiting programs, which began in 2009 and 2010, in other parts of state. Explore partnerships with other health care teaching institutions.</p> <p>Research shows the interdependence of the health of caregivers and the children in their care. There is also data to indicate that kin caregivers are in poorer health than others of their age.</p>	<p>The PLU nursing school project expanded its reach to Thurston County in Spring 2011.</p> <p>For the project's fourth semester, in Spring 2011, 17 nursing students participated in Olympia and Tacoma.</p> <p>Vancouver's WA State University Nursing School and Vancouver Community College Nursing program began partnering in September 2011 to replicate PLU's program.</p> <p>University of Washington School of Public Health seeks internship placements for graduate nutrition students. Initial project was a "community rotation" with the September 2011 Annual Kinship Retreat organized by the King County Kinship Collaboration in</p>	<p>WSU nursing schools in Yakima and Tri Cities will be approached next.</p> <p>Other possible projects for graduate nutrition students would be to prepare "wellness talks" to be presented to local kinship support groups.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
	partnership with the Odessa Brown Children's Clinic in Seattle.		
<p>Develop a pilot to provide kinship respite care.</p> <p>Respite care is a key strategy for relieving the stress on caregivers, thus allowing them to maintain their caregiving role.</p>	<p>In 2010, ADSA contracted with two Area Agencies on Aging (Lewis-Mason and Thurston AAA and Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern WA) to pilot two kinship respite care projects (\$20,000 each) from October 2010-June 2012.</p> <p>In September 2011, ADSA contracted with the Northwest Regional Council (AAA) to provide a kinship respite pilot project (\$20,000) for their four county areas from October 2011-June 2013.</p>	Review the successes and challenges of these projects to help develop kinship respite service best practice information.	Funding is from ADSA from federal National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFSCP). 10 percent limit rule restricts funding to serve relatives raising children.
<p>Encourage participation of kinship caregivers in the evidence-based class series Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) through Kinship Navigators, support groups, and links to the DOH Living Well website.</p> <p>See above on the health of caregivers.</p>	<p>King County was the first to sponsor a class series specific to this population in Spring 2010.</p> <p>ADSA and DOH developed a Living Well website <a href="https://livingwell.doh.wa.gov">https://livingwell.doh.wa.gov</a> that posts health promotion classes that can benefit kinship caregivers throughout WA State.</p>	<p>Share the information on classes through support groups, Kinship Navigators, county or regional kinship collaborations, the Kinship Caregiver Support Program, and local trainings and conferences. A link for the Living Well website is being added to the DSHS Kinship website.</p> <p>ADSA will continue to support the training of kinship care community partners as leaders in the health promotion classes.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Distribute health promotion materials to kinship caregivers via support groups, regional kinship conferences, Kinship Navigators, regional kinship collaborations, and through the DSHS Kinship Care website.	Regional kinship conferences in 2010 and 2011 in King and Pierce counties put a focus on kinship care families' health.	Promote dental In addition to health information and resources, through support groups, trainings, and kinship navigators in 2012. This will benefit both kinship caregivers and the children they are raising.	
<b>Metrics:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PLU nursing students began to collect data during winter 2010-2011 to be able to document outcomes in kinship caregivers' health by the conclusion of project. From an initial small sample, improvements were made in the areas of reducing fatigue, chronic pain, and stress. Improvement was shown in 12 of 13 areas.</li> <li>2. Analyze kinship caregiver health data from the 2011 DOH Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey to help target health promotion activities. Data available in mid-2012.</li> </ol>			

### ***Longer Term Action Items***

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next steps	Resources
Increase respite care resources for kinship caregivers	ADSA received a three-year Lifespan Respite Grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging in Fall 2010 to work in partnership with the Respite and Crisis Care Coalition of WA State (RCCCWA) and community partners to increase the information about and access to respite services and develop new respite options. The first statewide meeting was held in February 2011 with about 40 community agencies participating. Three regional meetings have since been held with about 75 community agencies participating, focused specifically on underserved populations.	A lifespan respite website and toll-free number are under development and will include resources to support kinship caregivers over the coming year.	There would be a cost if respite care were expanded beyond ADSA pilots.
<b>Metrics:</b>			

**Goal 3: Improve kinship caregiver access to information, resources, and services through improved coordination.**

***Short Term Action Items***

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
<p>Ensure that DSHS' new Washington Connection is designed with the needs of kinship caregivers in mind.</p> <p>There is a long history of caregivers being confused by the benefits application and WA Connection has the potential to overcome this barrier.</p>	<p>Workgroup members met with IT staff in January 2011 to discuss how to make the benefit portal more user-friendly for caregivers.</p> <p>Kinship Navigators and kinship support group leaders were informed about available local Washington Connection trainings in their areas.</p> <p>DSHS Kinship Website was submitted to WA Connection IT staff for insertion on resource page of website.</p>	<p>Workgroup members will continue to work with IT staff.</p>	
<p>Provide web-based information to caregivers on kinship care resources.</p> <p>As more caregivers gain internet access, this website should become an increasingly valuable resource.</p>	<p>DSHS Kinship Website, <a href="http://www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare">www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare</a></p> <p>Workgroup members continue to review website and make recommendations on updates. Recent updates include information on Child Profile, changes to Child-only TANF and Working Connections Childcare, and Medical Homes.</p> <p>The WA State Child Care Resource and Referral Network and Within Reach recently added the DSHS Kinship Care website to their resource pages.</p>	<p>ADSA will continue to take the lead in updating the website in conjunction with DSHS Information System Services Division.</p> <p>Other statewide information and referral websites are considering adding the kinship website to their own web pages.</p>	
<p>Improve communication and coordination between Kinship Navigators and CSO and DCFS staff.</p> <p>Partnership</p>	<p>Original proposal to out-station Navigators in CSOs was positively received in the TANF re-design process. However, at a March 2011 meeting attended by Lewis, Mason and Thurston counties CSO staff, the local Kinship Navigator, AAA regional</p>	<p>Follow-up to the June 2011 Pierce County meeting will be held in late 2011 or early 2012).</p> <p>A meeting will be scheduled for the Yakima area in early November 2011.</p>	

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
between Navigators and state agency staff leverages community resources for the benefit of clients.	staff, and ADSA and ESA headquarters staff, it was decided that out-stationing would not be the best use of Navigators' time and that other ways to improve coordination would be pursued (see below). A similar meeting was held in Pierce County in June 2011. A follow-up meeting for Lewis, Mason, and Thurston counties was held on October 4, 2011.		
Schedule Navigators to regularly address CSO and DCFS staff about the services they offer. See above.	Lewis, Mason and Thurston County meeting attendees agreed that periodic Navigator visits to CSO staff meetings would allow a useful exchange of information and help build relationships. Meetings were set up at the Chehalis and Olympia/Tumwater CSOs.	ADSA and ESA headquarters staff will hold similar discussions in other regions in Fall 2011 and beyond.	
Designate liaisons in each CSO and DCFS office with the Kinship Navigators (these could be volunteers such as social work student interns) and triage situations that need attention. See above.	Under consideration as part of TANF re-design. Regional meetings (see above) determined that while many CSOs might not be able to designate official liaisons at this time, most would probably be willing to identify key contact person(s). DCFS liaisons may also be a useful model.	ADSA and ESA headquarters staff will continue to promote formal contacts to facilitate Navigator access to state agency staff.	
Increase collaboration, and sharing of resources/ knowledge between foster care liaisons and Kinship Navigators. See above.	Liaisons are hired through a state recruitment and retention contract; Navigators through the Area Agencies on Aging. The Liaisons and Navigators have begun exchanging contact information as a first step toward more regular communication.  A statewide conference call was held in September 2011		



Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
	between Liaisons and Navigators to discuss what each does and how they can better work together. More calls are planned.		
More bridges between kinship and foster parent leaders are being built.	Kinship providers will be a part of the Pacific Northwest Caregivers Conference in January 2012. A kinship navigator serves on the conference planning committee. One event held as part of the conference will be the annual "Night of a Thousand Dreams" to recognize and honor good work in child welfare. For the first time, leaders in the kinship community will be honored.		
Workgroup members will present information on kinship research, resources, and services to various agencies and partners who may serve kinship caregivers and their children.	The ADSA Kinship Program Manager presented in 2011 to DOH Maternal Child Health headquarters staff, to Within Reach I & R staff, and to the Regional Medical Consultants with the Fostering Well-Being Program.	Kinship Workgroup members will continue to make presentations to public and private agency staff.	
Develop written resource materials specifically for kinship caregivers.	Basic Food flyer developed and distributed through mobile CSOs and DOH programs.	Update flyer and increase distribution: add to Washington Connection and DSHS Kinship Care websites; share with Kinship Navigators and regional kinship collaborations, etc.	
<b>Metrics:</b> 1. Measure hits on DSHS Kinship Care website as a means of determining effectiveness of efforts to inform caregivers electronically about available services and resources.			

### Longer Term Action Items

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
Develop trainings to sensitize CSO and DCFS staff to the needs of informal caregivers. State agency staff have engaged minimally with this population in the past but this is changing, making new training necessary.	Under consideration as part of TANF re-design process.	Child Welfare League of America is rolling out a new curriculum to sensitize staff who work with kinship caregivers. Workgroup will get more information about the curriculum.	
Develop multi-media guide to assist kinship caregivers in completing DSHS benefits application.		Explore development of short kinship video through a public/private partnership, in addition to creating written instructions to explain application process.	
Improve caregivers' access to training. Included will be training for raising high-need behaviorally disordered youth.	Workgroup members met with Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI) staff to discuss access to RFTI-sponsored training. Unlicensed caregivers receive information on all trainings through mailings. Available trainings include including a 30-hour curriculum for parenting children with behavioral problems and a 27-hour training targeted to kinship caregivers. A lending library and on-line videos are available to all caregivers at no cost.	RFTI has provided the following information about training for unlicensed caregivers: Parenting Plus curriculum (currently 30 hours) includes parenting children with behavioral problems. A Pre-service Training (27 hours) that addresses the specific concerns of unlicensed caregivers is available.	
<b>Metrics:</b>			

**Goal 4: Promote readiness to learn for children in kinship care.**

***Short Term Action Items***

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Next Steps	Resources
<p>Coordinate early learning, educational, health care, mental health, and income support systems.</p> <p>Non-parent caregivers are important resources in improving readiness to learn among the children in their care.</p>	<p>Worked with Department of Early Learning (DEL) to include the needs of kinship families throughout the state's recently produced Early Learning Plan.</p>	<p>Share information about early learning through support groups, Kinship Navigators, county or regional kinship groups, the Kinship Caregiver Support Program, and local trainings and conferences.</p>	
<p>Promote outreach to kinship families regarding the obligations of the K-12 system toward children with special educational needs, via the OSPI Special Education Ombudsman, the Governor's Office of Education Ombudsman, and the Treehouse Educational Advocacy program.</p>	<p>Treehouse has trained peer kinship advocate trainers who, along with others, are conducting local workshops throughout Washington state. Since 2010, Kinship Navigators and support group leaders are regularly informed of local educational advocacy trainings to share with caregivers.</p>		
<p>Promote Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Play and Learn groups.</p> <p>See above.</p>	<p>Information about the statewide FFN initiative and local services for family, friends and neighbors has been provided to Kinship Navigators and presented at Child Care Resource conferences.</p> <p>ADSA is represented on the statewide Family, Friend, and Neighbor Advisory Group.</p>	<p>Continue to provide information about Family, Friend, and Neighbor play groups through Kinship Navigators, support groups, trainings, and newsletters.</p>	
<p>Connect caregivers to DEL's Early Support for Infant and Toddlers (ESIT) and DOH's Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) programs</p> <p>Good health is key to</p>	<p>ESIT staff presented early intervention and referral/resource connections to Kinship Care Navigators. ESIT continues to present kinship care information and resources at quarterly program meetings, early</p>		

learning for young children.	learning workshops, and conferences.		
<b>Metrics:</b> 1. Incorporate data on children in kinship care in DEL's proposed "Early Learning Information System." Initial meeting was held in May 2011 and proposal to include demographic relationship question was approved.			

***Longer Term Action Items***

Action Item and Rationale	Current Status	Proposed Next Steps	Resources
Include kinship care families in home visiting programs in WA State.		Work with DEL and home visiting partner agencies to include kinship families (especially especially those receiving TANF) in state planning, direct services, and resource linkages.	
<b>Metrics:</b>			

I live with my Grandparents cuz my mom didn't take care of us. Now we don't have to go to foster care. We go to the car races, and the beach and Seattle. My ear was broken now it is fixed and now kids don't tease me. Dr. Gruss fix it. My papa got me a curious George to make me feel better. They take me to Cub Scouts and I am a wolf. I have clean clothes. I have good food and my own bedroom.

**Johnathan, Age 7, Aberdeen, WA**